

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### 2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Local Government Commission

Application ID: 14AC157514

Program Name: CivicSpark

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

#### Reviewers' Summary Comments:

##### Strengths:

The applicant gives a thorough review of the governmental legislation, relevant research, and practical knowledge surrounding climate change as well as efforts to build capacity to effect change on climate issues.

The applicant gives a detailed account of limits on current capacity and demonstrates clear linkages between these limits and their program design.

The applicant has devised a sophisticated tiered system for determining need for services to serve communities that are most in need.

The applicant refers to local reports (4 total) that contain evidence to support their location's need for services.

Evidence from their Annual Planning Survey in 2012 is presented to support their argument regarding lack of climate response capacity.

The applicant demonstrates clearly that local governments are in need of help to implement clean air programs as mandated by the State of California. The applicant demonstrates thoroughly that without some type of outside assistance, many of these municipalities and governments will not be able to meet these mandates.

The applicant describes the 4-step plan for an intervention similarly through both the Logic Model and the program narrative. The Logic Model provides a further level of detail to the design presented in the narrative.

The outcomes in the Logic Model are written to be specific and measurable (i.e., 85% (73 of 86) of local governments who receive at least 200 hours of capacity building services will meet at least one of their gap assessment goals due to capacity building activities provided by members that helped to make the organization more effective). The applicant clearly has thought about the expectations of their program design and what can feasibly be accomplished.

The applicant proposes a 4 step plan, based in research that addresses capacity building for climate change through multiple avenues. The gap assessments, service projects, volunteer projects, and transitioning services builds a comprehensive approach that starts with identifying community needs, to implementing change, to engaging volunteers in the activity, and finally, to building sustainability for the program design.

The applicant is modifying an established and well-researched framework as the basis of their Theory of Change.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide enough detail from their local reports or survey data that substantiates their claim of a need for services.

The applicant does not demonstrate clearly that the proposed program will ultimately help local governments meet the standards set forth by the State of California.

The applicant does not demonstrate clearly that using AmeriCorps members—instead of employees, contractors or other professionals—is an effective means for initiating and implementing change as described in the proposed program.

The applicant did not provide information on their past performance in an AmeriCorps program.

The applicant does not provide any mention or detail regarding success at past performance for CNCS grants or any other type of grants.

The applicant mentions that their project director has managed a previous AmeriCorps grant but does not give any details regarding success at achieving outcomes.

The applicant does not discuss its past performance on related issues or programs.